



## ISDH Receives Award for Outstanding Integration of Workers With Disabilities

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has been recognized for providing a working environment especially supportive of vocational access for persons with disabilities.

ISDH is the 2002 public sector winner of the "Profit From Our Ability Award."

The award was presented at a luncheon awards ceremony at the two-day 2002 Conference for People with Disabilities, "The Power of One: Creating a Change Reaction," organized by the Indiana Governor's Planning Council for People with Disabilities.

Julie Schaefer, a social service specialist in ISDH's Long-Term Care division, nominated ISDH for the award. Schaefer performs her job while using a wheelchair for mobility. A graduate of a Purdue business program, she is a professional with adult multiple sclerosis, which resulted in paralysis of her legs. Determined to maintain an active working life, she earned a Masters in Social Work in 1999 and says she has worked at ISDH for the past several years handling nursing home complaints from relatives of the deceased. She says she finds satisfaction in assisting the callers with information and referrals that help them through the grieving process. As a single mom, she will begin to start work on a Ph.D. as soon as she gets her 16-year-old son through college.

Asked about her nomination of the agency, she says she feels fortunate to be able to work at ISDH, for the opportunity to contribute, and for wonderfully supportive colleagues, especially her supervisor, Karen Smith.

Schaefer's nomination form indicated there are 12 full-time employees with a disability out of a staff of 702 persons at ISDH.



**ISDH AWARD RECEPTION GROUP** representing Health Care Regulatory Services are (l. to r.) Assistant Commissioner Liz Carroll; Julie Schaefer, Long-Term Care; Karen Smith, Long-Term Care and Schaefer's immediate supervisor; and Sue Hornstein, director, Long-Term Care.

Photo by Daniel Axler



**2002 PROFIT FROM OUR ABILITY AWARDS** plaque, presented to ISDH, is crafted in Plexiglas.

Schaefer said, "I don't want the article to be about me. The award would not have been possible without the help provided by Assistant Commissioner Liz Carroll who helped gather all the statistical data contained in the nomination application."

Current jobs of those at ISDH with disabilities, at the time of the nomination, included clerical, secretarial, accounting, data processing, computer programming, and microbiology supervision. ISDH was cited as supporting people with disabilities at a level above and beyond requirements of the American Disability Act (ADA). Amenities offered by

ISDH include: a specially constructed rest room facility with lift mechanism to assist in removal from a wheelchair; electric-eye controllers for the bathroom flush mechanism, sink faucet, and hand dryer; automated street entry doors and access doors on several floors where those with disabilities work; additional strobe lighting warning systems, where needed, for deaf workers; and special arrangements with bus and cab companies for special vehicles to transport staff to outside trainings and access to parking lots.

The awards program brochure states that the awards were developed to "recognize Indiana employers that demonstrate leadership in their efforts to employ people with disabilities."

Besides ISDH's public sector award, three other employer category winners were also recognized: MANUFACTURING—Jasper Engines and Transmissions, Jasper; SMALL BUSINESS—Fazoli's, Evansville; and CORPORATE—Holiday World & Splashin' Safari, Santa Claus, Indiana.

In addition, the Award for Excellence in reporting on disability issues was presented to two print category winners for publications with circulation over and under 40,000. They are: Jennifer Boen, health and social services reporter, Fort Wayne *News Sentinel* and Doug Wilson, reporter, *Bloomington Herald-Times*, respectively.

The broadcast category winner was NBC 33, Fort Wayne.

The awards program is sponsored by the Indiana Governor's Planning Council for People with Disabilities in conjunction with the Indiana Department of Commerce, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Indiana Workforce Development.

# New Audiology-Follow-up Component to Newborn Screening Program Will Help Assure Intervention

Weilin Long, director of ISDH's Newborn Hearing Screening program is elated about a new state requirement that audiologists treating infants with hearing problems must report to the ISDH. The new requirement will support increased thoroughness in the Universal Newborn Hearing process.

"Even more important," she says, "the audiology component will help ensure that all infants born in Indiana with a hearing deficit will receive medical and early intervention services." The new process becomes effective January 1, 2003.

Before addition of the audiology component, birth physicians were notified of infants with hearing problems, but a diagnosis of the hearing loss, with specific recommendations for intervention could only easily be confirmed by ISDH for infants who the physician referred to audiologists through the Indiana First Steps Early Intervention Program.

Long says that outcomes for some infants whose parents chose not to use the First Steps Program were in doubt since audiologists privately contracted by parents were not required to report to ISDH.

With the new reporting requirement for audiologists, all that has changed.

State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D. is sending a letter to all Indiana audiologists in December 2002 requesting their cooperation with the additional Audiological Guidelines.

Accompanying the letter is a copy of a new Diagnostic Audiological Evaluation Form. Dr. Wilson believes the form, which is designed with a checklist format, can easily be completed by audiologists and will markedly assist ISDH to track, follow-up, and assess the incidence of hearing loss in the state.

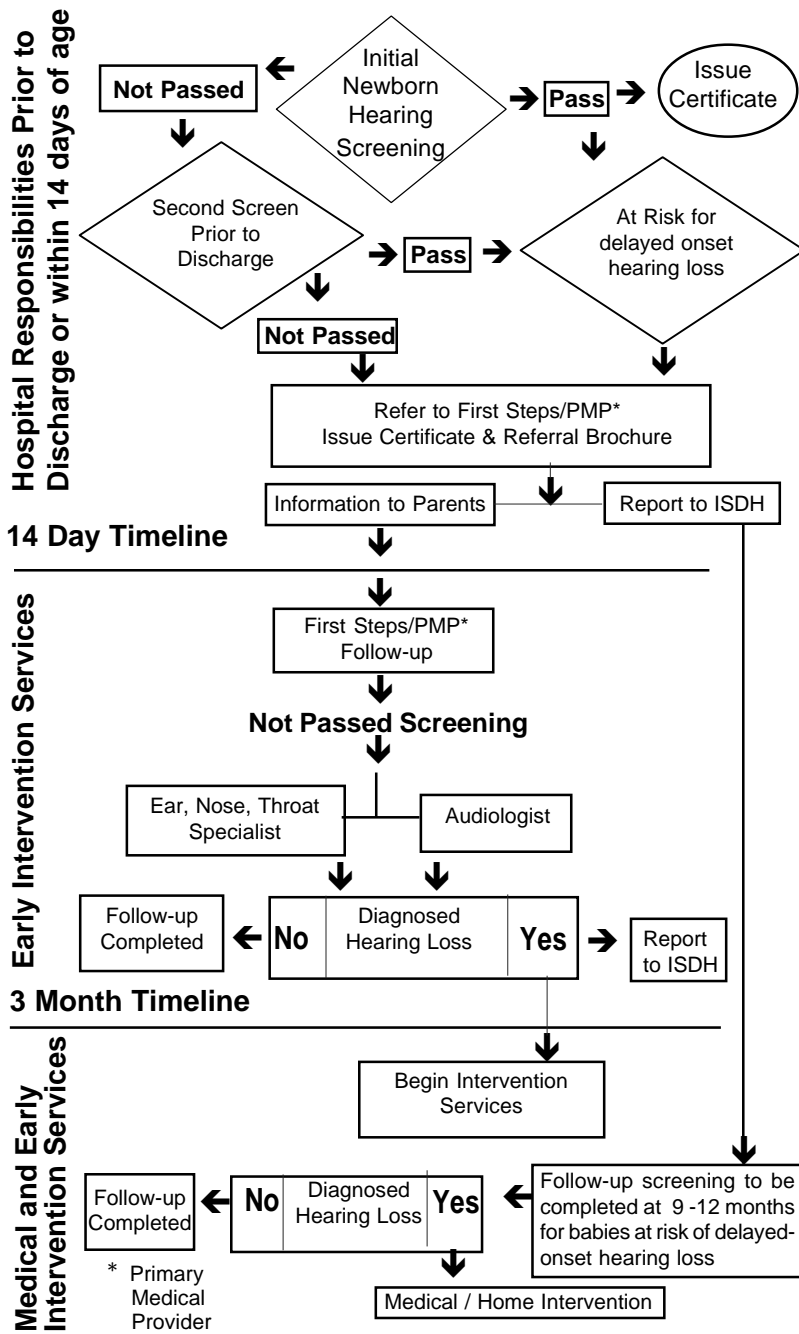
The form can be either faxed or mailed to ISDH once diagnostic testing is complete.

Once the form is received by ISDH, staff can cross-check information with First Steps to be certain that all babies referred for diagnostic testing receive proper services.

The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Process starts at the birth hospital, which is required to test, document, and pass the results, within 14 days of birth. Parents of the newborn child and the child's obstetrician are both notified of the results. If the child has not passed the screen or other factors are present that suggest high risk of delayed-onset hearing loss, Indiana First Steps Program or the child's primary medical provider (PMP) is also notified, per choice of the parents.

First Steps or the PMP makes arrangement for a diagnostic evaluation by either a licensed audiologist or by an ear, nose, and throat physician. If either of these diagnose hearing loss, then a recommendation is made to the PMP which may include medical referral to an

## Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) Process



otologist or otolaryngologist, to other specialists for a communication assessment, and/or referral for hearing-aid consultation with a pediatric audiologist. ISDH has established six Indiana regions and contracted, through the Indiana School for the Deaf, for the services of an audiologist for each region to serve as a liaison with the 130 to 150 Indiana audiologists who are actively serving children.

"It is the program's goal to ensure that all newborn children who do not pass the screen receive diagnostic testing within three months and see that medical and/or home intervention services begin before the child reaches six months of age. Our staff confirm completion of each step for every baby. They've been busy," Long said.



# Conference Room Dedicated to Woman Physician, a First at ISDH

State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D. presented the State Health Commissioner Award to Doris H. Merritt, M.D. in the presence of a gathering of Office of Women's Health and other ISDH staff, together with physician friends and guests in the Executive Board Room at the Indiana State Department of Health on December 6.

Following the presentation, the group proceeded to the 5th floor quarters of the Office of Women's Health for dedication of a new conference room named in Dr. Merritt's honor.

Dr. Wilson disclosed an extensive list of Dr. Merritt's accomplishments.

Dr. Merritt's career has spanned 45 years in medicine, attracting honors from the I.U. School of Medicine, the I.U. School of Nursing, Purdue University, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the State of Indiana.

For young women in the 1930s and 1940s, opportunities for professional careers were limited, but young Doris Merritt was an undaunted achiever. By doubling up on credits, Merritt graduated early (Phi Beta Kappa, cum laude) from Hunter College in 1944. Two and a half years as a naval officer followed. Merritt's efforts urging a roommate to return to college to complete premed education started Merritt thinking about a medical career for herself.

She applied to George Washington University in St. Louis, learning to her chagrin how many science courses she needed to qualify for admission. Two years later, with science prerequisites completed, she entered medical school, graduating in 1952. She and her husband completed residencies at Duke University, she in pediatrics and he in internal medicine.

When her husband accepted a position at NIH, she followed, but with no position in pediatrics available, she entered the Division of Research Grants.

"It was marvelous. I worked with people famous in physiology and medicine. I loved listening as they critiqued studies from young investigators and advised how to improve their work. I couldn't have done any of that, but I could be a great facilitator and that's



**STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER** Greg Wilson, M.D. (2nd from right above) discusses the personal and professional characteristics of fellow pediatrician Doris Merritt, M.D. (far right) and her career-long contributions to medical research, before presenting her with the State Health Commissioner Award (below left) in ceremonies at ISDH, December 6. Among those present for the award ceremonies (above, l. to r.) are Maureen McLean and Nancy Meade, both Maternal and Child Health; Nancy Hines, co-founder, *Overcoming Together*; David Pilbrow, Office of Public Affairs; and Barbara Levy Tobey, director, Office of Women's Health. **DR. MERRITT** (below right) cuts ribbon dedicating the new Doris Merritt, M.D. conference room located in the Office of Women's Health at the 2 North Meridian Street ISDH administrative offices.

*Photos by Daniel Axler*



what I discovered I loved to do—to move things along," she recalled, as reported in a 1997 interview for I.U.'s *Medicine* magazine.

That was only the beginning. In 1961, with two children, and a move with her husband Donald to join the I.U. Department of Medicine, she was appointed director of medical research grants and contracts. She is credited with bringing changes that helped transform the Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM) from a "quiet training ground for physicians to a bustling research center."

During the 17 years following her arrival, she helped bring \$55 million in construction grants to IUSM. And her administrative support helped increase IUSM's research dollars from \$1.8 million in 1961 to \$105 million by 1997.

Dr. Merritt credits making use of her early grant-related experience at NIH with her grant-making success at I.U.

"I lived in an era that was absolutely



parallel to the NIH's growth, and the country's support of health research," she said. "Coming in at the beginning, I learned the players and the intricacies of the NIH review process and how to fit them into the university world. This was an absolutely vital insight in helping people get things done."

Dr. Merritt received appointments as the first IUPUI Dean of Research and Sponsored Programs (1971); the first woman to chair the Board of Regents of the National Library of Medicine at the NIH (1978); first Acting Director of the National Center for Nursing Research (1986); and upon her return to I.U., Associate Dean, I.U. School of Medicine (1988); Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education, IUPUI; and simultaneously Acting Vice President for Research, I.U. (1997), held until her retirement in 1998.

Quotes and paraphrased material for this article were adapted by permission of *Medicine* magazine, a publication of the IU School of Medicine.

# Weights and Measures Laboratory Annual Accreditation Helps Support Indiana Companies' Domestic and International Trade

In December 2002, the Indiana State Department of Health Division of Weights and Measures was notified by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), that the ISDH Weights and Measures Laboratory has received National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation (NVLAP) for a third consecutive year. The accreditation applies through calendar 2003. Indiana is one of only 17 states where such accredited labs have been established.

The accreditation certifies the ability of trained state lab personnel to use lab equipment to test and verify the accuracy of weights and measures used in interstate and international commerce.

According to Larry Stump, director, Weights and Measures, the lab's calibration activities are important for helping to document that Indiana companies use standards for weights and measures identical to national and international standards that apply worldwide.

The ISDH Bureau of Weights and Measures activities help support access to trade by Indiana companies, like Cummins Engine, Rolls-Royce, Pioneer Seed, Delco-Remy America, Aventis Bio-Services, and Eli Lilly.

Larry Stump says that although the ISDH Weights and Measures lab does not directly test the weights and measures of Indiana's companies, due to their sheer number, the lab does test and certify the accuracy of weights and measures used by scale companies who do the actual company testing.

What's important, Stump says, is documented traceability, required by federal agencies, that link standards back through the state lab to the one kilogram weight housed at NIST in Gaithersburg, MD, which in turn is linked to the international one kg weight at the lab in Sevres, France.

To retain their testing certification, Stump says the Indiana scale companies, under state law, must have the accuracy of their weights and measures retested annually by ISDH.

The cost of Indiana's NVLAP accreditation inspection is \$13,900 and is borne

by NIST.

Stump says that the state's Weights and Measures Labs were upgraded at the time of the move to their new loca-



**2000 LAB UPGRADE** made initial qualification for NVLAP accreditation possible. Above, Weights and Measures Director Larry Stump conducts tour of new facility for ISDH administrative staff in February 2000.

*Photo by Daniel Axler*

tion on Shadeland Avenue in January 2000. The upgrade, he says, together with additional staff training, made it possible to qualify for the NVLAP accreditation. "The labs at their previous 1330 West Michigan Street location couldn't have qualified," he said.

He adds that Indiana was only the fifth state to obtain NVLAP accreditation two years ago.

According to Stump, the voluntary

## Weights and Measures Traceability - What is it?

Traceability refers to a documented link to the official U.S. one kg weight housed at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, MD. NIST standards are in turn calibrated to the international one kg standard maintained at the lab in Sevres, France.

### ... and why important?

Besides protecting the public by helping ensure that commercial enterprises abide by uniform weights and measures standards, federal agencies require measurement traceability to national standards for contract work on interstate highways, and for procurement of military, pharmaceutical, scientific, and medical products, and for obtaining ISO-9000 company registration to assure quality in conducting international trade.

accreditation process got started in Indiana when it became obvious that international trade requirements would require company validation of adherence to uniform weights and measures standards that could only be provided by way of a NVLAP accredited lab.

By being geographically accessible, Stump says he believed that ISDH's accredited Weights and Measures Lab would help cut the time needed for any Indiana company to validate its weights and measures needs.

As a proactive measure, Stump says, with the assistance of Bill White, director of administrative services, the labs began preparing for the NVLAP accreditation in 2000.



**For a wealth of health information, administrative rules, and data, see the Indiana State Department of Health Web site:**

<http://www.IN.gov/isdh>



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